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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/751,577	12/29/2000	Ross Miller	AT00092	8368

24710 7590 04/10/2002

ALIGN TECHNOLOGY, INC.
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EXAMINER

WILSON, JOHN J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3732	

DATE MAILED: 04/10/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.	09/751,577	Applicant(s)
	MILLER, ROSS	
Examiner	Art Unit	
John J. Wilson	3732	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 December 2000.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

4) Claim(s) 1-38 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-38 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 29 December 2000 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2. 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 1 may be optionally limited to one appliance, however, then language such as "successive shells" is confusing as to whether one appliance is actually an option or not. In claims 2 and 7, "the cavities" lacks proper antecedent basis.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Andrews (4591341) in view of Bergersen (3950851). Andrews teaches that it is known to use a bracket and wire system, column 1, lines 15-17, followed in series by using a mouthpiece, column 1, lines 20-27. It is noted that claim 1 requires only one appliance and one wire and bracket system. Andrews does not show a mouthpiece made from a polymeric shell. Bergersen teaches that it is known to form mouthpieces in shells 13 from polymers, column 2, lines 32-50. It would be obvious to one or ordinary skill in the art to modify Andrews to include using a

polymeric shell as shown by Bergersen in order to make use of well known mouthpiece structures for moving teeth in a desired manner.

Claims 2-5, 12—31 and 33-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Andrews in view of Bergersen as applied to the claims above, and further in view of Kurz (4348178). The above combination does not show the use of successive appliances, other than a wire and bracket system. Kurz teaches using successive shells including intermediate appliances, column 3, lines 22-39. It would be further obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the above combination to include using successive appliances as shown by Kurz in order to make use of known methods of moving teeth in series to obtain the desired results. The difference in placement of cavities is the known parameter for adjusting the amount that the teeth are moved by, therefore, this difference is held to be an obvious matter of choice in the degree of a known parameter to obtain a desired degree of movement. The number of intermediate appliances used is an obvious matter of choice in the number of a known step used to obtain a known result. As to claim 12, the specific time interval used is an obvious matter of choice in the degree of known parameters, such as difference in placement of the cavities or number of appliances used, and therefore, is also an obvious matter of choice to the skilled artisan for the same reasons given above. As to claim 25, the specific type of movement used is an obvious matter of choice in well known ways of moving teeth to one of ordinary skill in the art. As to claim 26, the process of diagnosing before choosing a treatment plan is well known in all medical arts, therefore, choosing between known systems in the art when needed by a patient

would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. As to claim 30 and 31, Kurz teaches using a plaster model.

Claims 6-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Andrews in view of Kurz. Andrews teaches that it is known to use a bracket and wire system, column 1, lines 15-17, followed in series by using a mouthpiece, column 1, lines 20-27. not show the use of successive appliances, other than a wire and bracket system. Kurz teaches using successive shells including intermediate appliances, column 3, lines 22-39. It would be further obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the above combination to include using successive appliances as shown by Kurz in order to make use of known methods of moving teeth in series to obtain the desired results. The difference in placement of cavities is the known parameter for adjusting the amount that the teeth are moved by, therefore, this difference is held to be an obvious matter of choice in the degree of a known parameter to obtain a desired degree of movement. The number of intermediate appliances used is an obvious matter of choice in the number of a known step used to obtain a known result. As to claim 11, the specific time interval used is an obvious matter of choice in the degree of known parameters, such as difference in placement of the cavities or number of appliances used, and therefore, is also an obvious matter of choice to the skilled artisan for the same reasons given above.

Claim 32 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Andrews in view of Bergersen and Kurz as applied to claim 30 above, and further in view of Andreiko et al (5454717). The above combination does not show using a digital model. Andreiko teaches

using a digital model. It would be further obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the above combination to include using a digital model as shown by Andreiko in order to better analyze the patient's condition.

Claims 1-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Andrews (4591341) in view of Chishti et al (5975893). Andrews teaches that it is known to use a bracket and wire system, column 1, lines 15-17, followed in series by using a mouthpiece, column 1, lines 20-27. Andrews does not show a mouthpiece made from a polymeric shell. Chishti teaches that it is known to form mouthpieces in shells 13 from polymers and to use a plurality of shells to move teeth. It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Andrews to include using a plurality of successive polymeric shell as shown by Chishti in order to make use of well known mouthpiece structures for moving teeth in a desired manner.

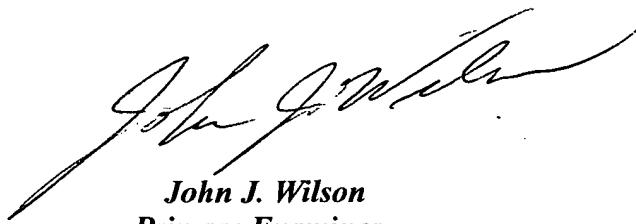
Drawings

The drawings filed December 29, 2000 are found to be acceptable by the examiner.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Miller (4725229) teaches that it is known to change a wire and bracket system to move teeth in desired amounts over desired times, column 1, lines 55-69. Hilgers et al (5131843) teaches that it is known to use a variety of different appliances consecutively to move teeth, column 1, lines 10-32.

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to John Wilson at telephone number (703) 308-2699.



John J. Wilson
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3732

jjw

April 5, 2002

Fax (703) 308-2708

Work Schedule: Monday to Friday – Flex Time